

VZCZCXRO7566
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #1482/01 2240827
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 110827Z AUG 08
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2478
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//
RHMFIUU/CMC WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7257
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4246
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4099
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5593
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 4012
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2580

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 JERUSALEM 001482

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR ABRAMS
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (8/11): Mourning over the death of Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish

Main Stories:

All dailies focus on the passing away of the Palestinian national poet, Mahmoud Darwish, on August 9. Al-Quds writes in a prominent black headline, "Sadness and mourning over the passing away of Darwish unites us. The [Palestinian Authority (PA)] President sends [PA Chief of Staff] Al-Husseini to Washington to arrange the procedure of transferring the body [to Ramallah]." Al-Ayyam's sole headline on the front page reads, "Darwish's body will be buried in Ramallah." Al-Hayat Al-Jadida writes, "The homeland is preparing for the funeral of Mahmoud Darwish in Ramallah tomorrow." In related coverage, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that PA President Abbas received letters of condolence from several leaders and officials, including the King of Morocco, the President of Tunisia, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan, the U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem, and the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of the United Arab Emirates.

Al-Quds reports that thousands of people participated in a sit-in organized by Hamas at the Rafah crossing point on August 10, in order to ask the Egyptian authorities to make a serious effort to open the crossing and end the Israeli "siege" on the Gaza Strip. At the same time, Islamists held a demonstration in front of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo, asking for official Egyptian intervention to lift the "siege." An Egyptian official reportedly told AFP that Egypt has intensified its security presence on the border to resist any Gazan attempts to enter by force. In related coverage, Al-Quds cites findings from a poll conducted by Near East Consulting on July 29-30, according to which 40% of Gazans are thinking of emigrating.

Citing DBA, Al-Quds writes on its front page that the leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyyah, met with a recently-released prisoner from

an Israeli jail and told the media that Hamas would hold firm in its demands regarding any prisoner exchange deal with Israel involving the captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Al-Quds highlights news, cited from DBA, that the Arab League has welcomed the August 8 statement issued by the European Union criticizing Israel's decision to establish new settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem, as well as a similar statement issued by Russia on August 10. In related coverage in Al-Quds, the Regional and International Relations Department of the PLO is said to have asked UNESCO to withdraw its decision, made during a recent meeting in Canada, granting Israel responsibility and supervision over the Al-Maghrabi Gate in Jerusalem's Old City.

Weekend stories

Sunday, August 10, 2008

The death of the Palestinian national poet, Mahmoud Darwish, dominates the headlines in all the dailies. Darwish died in a Texas hospital on August 9 from complications after undergoing open-heart surgery on August 7. The dailies carry expressions of condolence from Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and the Minister of Culture.

Al-Quds also leads with news that Fatah and Hamas agreed in principle on August 9 to cease their politically-motivated arrests of one another's members and to release all those who have been

JERUSALEM 00001482 002 OF 003

arrested since the Gaza beach explosion on July 25. The agreement does not reportedly specify dates or procedures and the Islamic Jihad leader, Sheikh Nafez Azzam, announced to the press that Hamas will close their "political arrest file" in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank once Fatah demonstrates its readiness to do the same.

All dailies cover Prime Minister Fayyad's meeting with Yemeni president Ali Abdallah Saleh in Sana'a on August 9. The dailies report that Fayyad praised both the Yemeni initiative and President Abbas' initiative to achieve Palestinian national unity. Fayyad reportedly suggested the formation of a transitional national reconciliation government, run by neither Fatah nor Hamas. Fayyad is also said to have briefed the Yemeni president on the latest developments in the Palestinian Territories and the efforts that have been made to restore Palestinian national unity, as well as the suffering caused by Israeli policies, including the "escalation" of attacks in Palestinian areas and the expansion of settlements.

Al-Ayyam carries a story reported by the Ma'an news agency, according to which Israel will allow 1000 Palestinians living abroad to return to the West Bank on the basis of family reunification. Hussein Al-Sheikh, head of the PA's Civil Affairs Committee, has reportedly asked these individuals to apply for visitor's permits through the Civil Affairs Committee to guarantee their return to the West Bank, where they will then be able to obtain national identity cards.

Al-Quds carries a press release on p. 2 from the Palestinian NGO Ta'oun, announcing the signing of an agreement with the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem and MEPI which aims at developing the capacity of local civil society, law, and government institutions in Nablus.

Saturday, August 9, 2008

All dailies lead with different remarks made by Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad during his trip to Yemen on August 8. Al-Quds writes that Fayyad asked the Arab countries to make good on monetary pledges they made to the Palestinian Authority (PA), given the PA's critical financial situation. Al-Ayyam focuses on Fayyad's statement that his current government position will be his last in the PA. Citing the official Palestine News Agency WAFA, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida carries Fayyad's remark that the revolution in Gaza has

allowed Israel to act freely in the West Bank in terms of settlement and security activities.

A lead story in Al-Quds focuses on the "Arab failure" to prevent Israeli involvement in a Jordanian project aimed at protecting the Al-Maghrabi Gate in Jerusalem's Old City. Citing remarks made by the head of the Al-Aqsa Reconstruction Committee, Ra'ef Nijem, in an interview with the Jordanian newspaper Al-Dustur on August 7, Al-Quds writes that the recent decision of the "International Folklore Committee," made during meetings in Canada at which a Jordanian delegation was present, allows the Israeli authorities to share in the responsibility for Al Aqsa. No other details about this decision are provided.

All dailies report on Israeli actions in the West Bank and Jerusalem on August 8. Al-Quds writes that Israeli soldiers attacked demonstrators during their weekly peaceful demonstrations against the separation barrier in Ni'llin and Be'lin villages outside of Ramallah, and in Al Ma'sara village near Bethlehem. Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that Israeli soldiers used large water hoses to

JERUSALEM 00001482 003 OF 003

disperse the demonstrators in Be'lin and Ni'llin, and Al-Ayyam states that dozens of demonstrators were injured.

Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida carry remarks made by the U.S. Security Coordinator, General Dayton, in an interview with the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that Israel will allow 200 bullet-proof vests and 145 cars destined for Palestinian security forces to enter the Palestinian Territories from Jordan.

According to Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, the Palestinian owner of a house in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, was arrested on August 8 and sentenced to 3 months in jail for refusing to give the keys of his house to a Jewish Committee and an Israeli court who intend to establish a settlement in the area.

Al-Quds writes on p. 2 that the U.S. Consul General, Jake Waller, called the Nablus-based Palestinian businessman Ziad Anabtawi, Executive Manager of the Anabtawi Companies for Investment and Development, to congratulate him on his release from an Israeli prison and to confirm his support for the Palestinian private sector in Nablus.

BLOCK QUOTES:

11. Independent Al-Ayyam runs its daily editorial by Hamada Fara'neh entitled, "Advice for the Palestinian President" (08/11): "More than ever before, President Mahmoud Abbas needs the solidarity of the Fatah movement. The movement, as a political struggle organization, is the mother that delivered Abu Mazen and made him president, as it did the late Arafat before him, and Ahmad Qureia after [Arafat]. Without Fatah, these leaders and others would not have had the chance to be in the position of decision-maker, and they would not have had the national respect ... Abu Mazen wishes to re-run for the Palestinian Authority elections, and this will not be accomplished, will not happen, and will not be successful without the solidarity and unity of the Fatah movement...in order for this to happen, Abu Mazen must have his main responsibility, his main effort and his main initiative towards his colleagues and brothers in the [Fatah] movement. He will be grand in their eyes when he takes the [national] reconciliation initiative...because this is the way to overcome the revolution [note: it is unclear whether the writer refers to a revolution within Fatah, or between Fatah and Hamas]... Without taking this road, the Palestinian national movement will not prevail over Israel; without this option, the national project will not succeed in facing the expanding Israeli settlement project. So, will Abu Mazen do it [reunite Fatah]? Can anyone advise him to do this, for his sake in the first place, and for the sake of the Palestinian people in the second and last place? He is known to be a man of freedom...and democracy, and this is why he succeeded in becoming president and gained the support of the Palestinian people. In order for him to continue, he has to fulfill his duties, which no one can do in his place...since he is the president, the

candidate and the leader."

WALLES